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Page 8

Fires rage in several states as heat wave broils U.S. West

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER
Associated Press

Firefighters working in searing weather struggled to contain a Northern California wildfire that continued to grow Sunday and forced the temporary closure of a major highway, one of several large blazes burning across the U.S. West amid another heat wave that shattered records and strained power grids.

In Arizona, two firefighters died Saturday after a plane they were in crashed during a survey of a small wildfire in rural Mohave County. The Beech C-90 aircraft was helping perform reconnaissance over the lightning-caused Cedar Basin Fire, near the tiny community of Wikieup, when it went down around noon.

The two firefighters were the only people on board. Officials identified one of them as Jeff Piechura, a retired Tucson fire chief who was working for the U.S. Forest Service. The name of the other was withheld until relatives could be notified. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the crash.

In California, officials asked all residents to reduce power consumption quickly after a major wildfire in southern Oregon knocked out interstate power lines, preventing up to 5,500 megawatts of electricity from flowing south into the state.

Continued on Page 2



Fire consumes a home as the Sugar Fire, part of the Beckwourth Complex Fire, tears through Doyle, Calif., on Saturday, July 10, 2021.

Associated Press

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Fires rage in several states as heat wave broils U.S. West

The California Independent System Operator, which runs the state's power grid, said Saturday the Bootleg Fire took three transmission lines off-line, straining electricity supplies as temperatures in the area soared.

"The Bootleg Fire will see the potential for extreme growth today," the National Weather Service in Medford, Oregon, tweeted Sunday.

Pushed by strong winds, the blaze exploded to 224 square miles (580 square kilometers) as it raced through heavy timber in Oregon's Fremont-Winema National Forest, near the Klamath County town of Sprague River.

To the southeast, the largest wildfire of the year in California was raging near the border with Nevada. The Beckwourth Complex Fire — a combination of two lightning-caused blazes burning 45 miles (72 kilometers) north of Lake Tahoe — showed no sign of slowing its rush northeast from the Sierra Nevada forest region after doubling in size between Friday and Saturday. Late Saturday, flames jumped U.S. 395, which was closed near the small town of Doyle in California's Las-



A truck driver who hauls fire equipment watches as the Sugar Fire, part of the Beckwourth Complex Fire, burns in Doyle, Calif., on Saturday, July 10, 2021.

Associated Press

sen County. The lanes reopened Sunday, and officials urged motorists to use caution and keep moving along the key north-south route where flames were still active.

"Do not stop and take pictures," said the fire's Operations Section Chief Jake Cagle. "You are going to impede our operations if you stop and look at what's going on." Cagle said structures had burned in

Doyle, but he didn't have an exact number. Bob Pray, who manages the Buck-Inn Bar in the town of about 600 people, said he saw at least six houses destroyed after Saturday's flareup. The fire was smoldering Sunday in and around Doyle, but he feared some remote ranch properties were still in danger.

"It seems like the worst is over in town, but back on the mountainside the fire's

still going strong. Not sure what's going to happen if the wind changes direction," Pray said. Erratic winds were a concern for firefighters, Cagle noted, with gusts expected to reach 20 mph (32 kph). The blaze, which was only 9% contained, increased to 131 square miles (339 square kilometers). Temperatures in the area could top 100 degrees (37 Celsius) again Sunday.

It was one of several fires threatening homes across Western states that were expected to see triple-digit heat through the weekend as a high-pressure zone blankets the region.

Death Valley in southeastern California's Mojave Desert reached 128 degrees Fahrenheit (53 Celsius) on Saturday, according to the National Weather Service's reading at Furnace Creek. The shockingly high temperature was actually lower than the previous day, when the location reached 130 F (54 C).

Death Valley also recorded a 130-degree day in August of last year. If that reading and the one Friday are confirmed by experts as accurate, they will be the hottest highs recorded there since July 1913, when the Furnace Creek desert hit 134 F (57 C), considered the highest measured temperature on Earth.

The National Weather Service warned the dangerous conditions could cause heat-related illnesses. Palm Springs in Southern California also hit a record high temperature of 120 F (49 C) Saturday, while Las Vegas tied the all-time record high of 117 F (47 C). □

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Pfizer to discuss vaccine booster with U.S. officials Monday

By HOPE YEN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pfizer says it plans to meet with top U.S. health officials Monday to discuss the drugmaker's request for federal authorization of a third dose of its COVID-19 vaccine as President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser acknowledged that "it is entirely conceivable, maybe likely" that booster shots will be needed.

The company said it was scheduled to have the meeting with the Food and Drug Administration and other officials Monday, days after Pfizer asserted that booster shots would be needed within 12 months.

Pfizer's Dr. Mikael Dolsten told The Associated Press last week that early data from the company's booster study suggests people's antibody levels jump five-to-10-fold after a third dose, compared to their second dose months earlier — evidence it believes supports the need for a booster.

On Sunday, Dr. Anthony Fauci didn't rule out the possibility but said it was too soon for the government to recommend another shot. He said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the FDA did the right thing last week by pushing back against Pfizer's assertion with their statement that they did not



In this May 11, 2021 file photo, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks during a Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions hearing to examine an update from Federal officials on efforts to combat COVID-19, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

view booster shots as necessary "at this time."

Fauci said clinical studies and laboratory data have yet to fully bear out the need for a booster to the current two-shot Pfizer and Moderna vaccines or the one-shot Johnson & Johnson regimen.

"Right now, given the data and the information we have, we do not need to give people a third shot," he said. "That doesn't mean we stop there. ... There are studies being done now ongoing as we

speak about looking at the feasibility about if and when we should be boosting people."

He said it was quite possible in the coming months "as data evolves" that the government may urge a booster based on such factors as age and underlying medical conditions. "Certainly it is entirely conceivable, maybe likely at some time, we will need a boost," Fauci said.

Monday's planned meeting between Pfizer and U.S. health officials was first re-

ported by The Washington Post.

Currently only about 48% of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated. Some parts of the country have far lower immunization rates, and in those places the delta variant is surging. Last week, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the CDC director, said that's leading to "two truths" — highly immunized swaths of America are getting back to normal while hospitalizations are rising in other places.

Fauci said it was inexplica-

ble that some Americans are so resistant to getting a vaccine when scientific data show how effective it is in staving off COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations, and he was dismayed by efforts to block making vaccinations more accessible, such as Biden's suggestion of door-to-door outreach.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson, R-Ark., agreed Sunday that there is a vaccine resistance in Southern and rural states like his because "you have that more conservative approach, skepticism about government."

The grassroots component of the federal vaccination campaign has been in operation since April, when supplies of shots began outpacing demand. It was outlined and funded by Congress in the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill passed in March and overwhelmingly is carried out by local officials and private sector workers and volunteers. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., blasted opposition to vaccination efforts from some GOP lawmakers as "absolute insanity." He said House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy of California and others in the party need to speak out against "these absolute clown politicians playing on your vaccine fears for their own selfish gain." □

Feds: Dark web operator sought to sell inside information

By LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal authorities say they are seeking a fugitive who tried to create a marketplace in the dark spaces of the internet for those with an appetite for inside information on stocks.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss said Apostolos Tovias, 30, of Athens, Greece, identified himself online as "The Bull" as he solicited and offered to sell inside information.

Federal authorities unsealed a criminal indictment against him on Friday, charging him with se-

curities fraud and money laundering.

They said he's sold inside information on stocks since December 2016, when he registered a "Dark Web" internet site known as AlphaBay Market where he charged individuals \$99.95 weekly or \$299 monthly subscriptions to get access to inside information on stocks. The "Dark Web" is an area of the internet where hidden identities flourish, allowing individuals to set up marketplaces for various illegal products and services such as illegal drugs, stolen identities and computer hacking.

The site only operated for about six months but Tovias then began using encrypted messaging and email services to communicate with customers, authorities said. Online, he used an avatar, labeling himself as "The Bull," they said.

Among information Tovias sold was a pre-release earnings report misappropriated from a publicly traded company, they said.

Strauss said in a release that Tovias tried to hide his insider trading scheme behind anonymizing software, screennames, and

bitcoin payments.

William F. Sweeney Jr., head of New York's FBI office, said Tovias created a business model so he could sell steal and sell inside information while hiding his footprints.

"The FBI operates within the Dark Web too, and as Tovias learned today, we don't stop enforcing the law just because you commit federal crimes from behind a router with your keyboard," he said.

The Securities and Exchange Commission brought civil charges against Tovias on Friday in Manhattan, saying Tovias

told an Internal Revenue Service agent posing online as a customer that some information he obtained was "sensitive and more importantly illegal to use or share."

The SEC said some of the over 100 customers Tovias signed up for subscriptions were undercover agents of the IRS and FBI.

The SEC said Tovias agreed online last August to meet with two FBI agents posing as customers. When the FBI agents said they were based in the United States, Tovias said he was too, the SEC said. □

Schumer wants NRA investigated for bankruptcy fraud

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHAEL R. SISAK

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on Sunday called on the Justice Department to investigate the National Rifle Association for bankruptcy fraud, saying the financially stable gun-rights group abused the system when it sought bankruptcy protection in the wake of a New York lawsuit seeking to put it out of business.

A judge rejected the NRA's bankruptcy case in May, ruling the nonprofit organization had not acted in good faith. NRA leaders made clear that the organization was "in its strongest financial condition in years" and was seeking bankruptcy protection so it could change its state of incorporation from New York to gun-friendly Texas. Schumer, a New York Democrat, said the NRA's continued heavy spending on advertising criticizing proposed gun control measures and the nomination of gun control lobbyist David Chipman to run the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives are further evidence that its bankruptcy filing was in-



New York Sen. Chuck Schumer speaks during a news conference in New York, Monday, June 28, 2021.

Associated Press

spired by legal, not financial, concerns.

"They recently told the judicial branch of government that they are bankrupt after the lawsuit by Tish James, and at the same time they're saying they're bankrupt, they're spending millions of dollars on ads to stop universal background checks," Schumer said, referencing New York Attorney General Letitia James. "That demands an inves-

tigation by the Justice Department."

The NRA said it was working on a statement. The Justice Department declined comment.

The organization filed for bankruptcy protection in January, months after James sued the NRA, seeking its dissolution over claims that top executives illegally diverted tens of millions of dollars for lavish personal trips, no-show contracts for

associates and other questionable expenditures. That lawsuit is ongoing.

In dismissing the NRA's bankruptcy case, Judge Harlin Hale wrote that it appeared "less like a traditional bankruptcy case in which a debtor is faced with financial difficulties or a judgment that it cannot satisfy and more like cases in which courts have found bankruptcy was filed to gain an unfair advantage

in litigation or to avoid a regulatory scheme."

Schumer, speaking to reporters Sunday, highlighted a \$2 million advertising blitz the NRA announced in April, aimed at fighting gun control proposals, while the bankruptcy case was still pending. The organization said it was placing ads on TV and digital platforms, sending out mailers and holding town hall meetings in at least 12 states.

In West Virginia, Schumer said, the organization spent \$250,000 on TV ads encouraging people to call U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin, a Democrat, and tell him to reject Chipman's confirmation. Chipman, a former ATF agent, has worked as a policy adviser at an organization that supports gun control. "How can you say you're bankrupt at the same time you have millions of dollars to spend on ads throughout the country trying to prevent universal background checks fundraising and other things that will stop the killings on the streets?" Schumer said. "The bottom line is the NRA shot itself in the foot when they declared bankruptcy and still have millions of dollars," he said. □

4 arrested, guns seized at hotel near All-Star Game events



A pedestrian moves past the Maven Hotel Sunday, July 11, 2021, in lower downtown Denver. A pedestrian moves past the Maven Hotel Sunday, July 11, 2021, in lower downtown Denver.

Associated Press

By THOMAS PEIPERT and MICHAEL BALSAMO

DENVER (AP) — Four people have been arrested and more than a dozen weapons and hundreds of rounds of ammunition have been seized at a down-

town Denver hotel that is close to several events planned in conjunction with the upcoming Major League Baseball All-Star Game.

Officers responding to a tip searched two rooms at the

Maven Hotel, a block from Coors Field, on Friday night. Three men and a woman in their 40s were arrested, and two vehicles were impounded to be searched for evidence.

The recovered weapons included several rifles, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press.

So far, investigators have not found any evidence to suggest the group was plotting a mass shooting or other similar attack, the official said, while cautioning that the investigation is still in its early stages. The official could not discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Authorities were called after an employee found the guns in a hotel room, the official said.

The men who were arrested are being investigated for possession of a weapon by a previous offender, and the woman, who has a separate warrant, is being investigated on a drug charge.

"We have no reason to believe this incident was connected to terrorism or a threat directed at the All-Star Game," the FBI said in a statement released Sunday. "We are not aware of any threat to the All-Star Game events, venues, players or the community at this time."

Denver police said in a statement the tip that led to the arrests was an excellent example of the community's "critical role" in public safety. It said visitors should always be aware of their surroundings and re-

port any suspicious or illegal behavior.

No other information was released, and police did not immediately respond to a request for additional comment Sunday.

Coors Field will host the All-Star Game on Tuesday, but festivities have been underway in and around the ballpark and downtown for the past several days. □



In Jordan sedition trial, U.S. defendant alleges torture

By KARIN LAUB and

OMAR AKOUR

Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) —

A U.S. citizen and former top aide to Jordan's King Abdullah II alleged he was tortured in Jordanian detention and fears for his life, his U.S.-based lawyer said Sunday, on the eve of a verdict in the high-profile sedition trial linked to a rare public rift in the kingdom's ruling family.

Along with the mistreatment allegations, the closed-door trial before Jordan's state security court "has been completely unfair," Michael Sullivan, a former federal prosecutor hired by defendant Bassem Awadallah's U.S.-based family, told The Associated Press.

The allegations of mistreatment, denied by Jordanian officials Sunday, were raised just days before Jordan's king is to become the first Arab leader to meet with President Joe Biden at the White House on July 19. Jordan is a key Western ally in an unstable Middle East. Awadallah and co-defendant Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, a distant cousin of the king, have pleaded not guilty to sedition and incitement charges, which carry lengthy prison terms.

The defendants were accused of conspiring with a senior royal — Prince



In this June 21, 2021 file photo, Bassem Awadallah, a former royal adviser, leaves a state security court in a vehicle after the first session of his closed-door trial, in Amman, Jordan.

Associated Press

Hamzah, a half-brother of the king — to foment unrest against the monarch while soliciting foreign help. The indictment portrayed Hamzah as a disgruntled royal who never forgave Abdullah for taking away his title of crown prince in 2004. Hamzah, who was placed under house arrest in April and has been seen in public just once since then, denied he incited against the king, saying he was being punished for calling out high-level corruption.

Despite the serious nature of the allegations against Awadallah and bin Zaid,

the trial ended after just six sessions. The court denied requests by Jordanian defense lawyers to call witnesses and prosecutors only shared purported transcripts, but not audio, from surveillance of the alleged plotters.

The prosecutor's office at the state security court denied the trial was unfair. Awadallah was "guaranteed due process" in line with Jordanian law, the prosecutor said in a statement to the AP. "He has not been mistreated in any way, and his allegations of torture of any kind are false."

Sullivan, a former U.S. attorney for Massachusetts and former acting director of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, said that based on the way the trial was conducted, a guilty verdict appeared to be a foregone conclusion. He said any conviction would be appealed. The U.S. legal team, which has remained in the background until now, will play a more open role in the appeals stage, said Sullivan. He said the aim is to raise awareness about Awadallah's case in the United States and internationally.

This includes "the serious concerns about his safety and security in the short term and the complete unfairness in terms of the process, as well as obviously the torture and violation of a number of international conventions, treaties and laws," Sullivan said.

The prosecutor's office said Awadallah didn't raise torture allegations during the court hearings, his 17 meetings with his Jordanian lawyer or the first four of his five meetings with the U.S. consul in Jordan. "He only made these claims at his most recent meeting with the consul, as the ruling's pronouncement (verdict) neared," the statement said.

Sullivan said Awadallah told his visitor that he had been beaten, subjected to electrical shock and was threatened with future mistreatment "if he didn't confess."

The prosecutor's office said Awadallah gave a voluntary statement about the case, denying it had been extracted by force.

Awadallah's family said late last week that he fears for his life. "Bassem is justifiably fearful of being killed in prison after the sentencing, especially because he held several high ranking and sensitive positions in the Jordanian government," the family said. □

Protests erupt in Georgia after beaten journalist dies

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) — Several thousand people protested in front of the Georgian parliament on Sunday evening, demanding that the ex-Soviet nation's prime minister resign over the death of a journalist who was attacked and beaten by anti-LGBT protesters.

Cameraman Alexander Lashkarava was found dead in his home by his mother earlier Sunday, according to the TV Pirveli channel he worked for. Lashkarava was one of several dozen journalists attacked last Monday by opponents of an LGBT march that had been scheduled to take place that day in

the Georgian capital of Tbilisi.

Organizers of the Tbilisi March For Dignity cancelled the event, saying authorities had not provided adequate security guarantees. Opponents of the march blocked off the capital's main avenue, denounced journalists covering the protest as pro-LGBT propagandists and threw sticks and bottles at them. Lashkarava, according to his colleague Miranda Baghaturia, was beaten by a mob of 20 people. Local TV channels later showed him with bruises on his face and blood on the floor around him. Media reports

say he sustained multiple injuries and had to undergo surgery but was discharged from a hospital on Thursday. The cause of his death was not immediately clear. Police launched an investigation into Lashkarava's death, which Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and President Salome Zurabishvili both described as "a tragedy."

Animosity against sexual minorities is strong in the conservative Black Sea nation of Georgia.

The Tbilisi Pride group said Monday that opponents of the planned march were supported by the government and by the Geor-



Opponents of the march shout as they block off the capital's main avenue to an LGBT march in Tbilisi, Georgia, Monday, July 5, 2021.

Associated Press

gian Orthodox Church. The Open Caucasus Media group published a photo of a man it said was a local

TV journalist being pulled away from the scene in a headlock by an Orthodox priest. □

Iran anger at U.S., European support for opposition group

BERLIN (AP) — The Iranian government has expressed anger over the appearance of senior European and U.S. politicians at a rally in support of an opposition group that has long sought to overthrow Iran's theocratic rulers — and which was once considered a terror organization by the West. Iran's official IRNA news agency reported that the country's foreign ministry on Sunday summoned Slovenia's envoy in Tehran over a video message by the EU nations' prime minister at the event hosted by the National Council of Resistance of Iran.

The NRCI is the political wing of the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, which is considered a terror organization by Iran and was once designated as such by the United States until it was delisted in 2012. The EU removed the group from its terrorism list in 2009. Hundreds of people rallied Saturday in front of Berlin's iconic Brandenburg Gate, while speakers including former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Democratic strategist Donna Brazile and numerous serving U.S. senators from across the aisle lauded the NRCI and its aims.

Pompeo, who defended the Trump administration's



People attend a protest rally in Berlin, Germany, Saturday, July 10, 2021 as part of the 'Free Iran World Summit 2021.'

Associated Press

hard-line stance against Iran over its nuclear program, claimed in his video address that the Iranian government was "at its most precarious state" since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and called for sustained pressure on Tehran. The former top U.S. diplomat also compared Iran's newly elected president, Ebrahim Raisi, to a "mass murderer" for his role in the execution of thousands of Iranian political prisoners

in 1988. "The United States should take the lead to hold him accountable for the crimes against humanity that he committed," said Pompeo, adding that the U.S. government should tell allies in Europe and Asia if they deal with Raisi, "the United States will hold them accountable as well." Pompeo praised the NRCI, whose funding is unclear and which has in the past paid foreign politicians to appear at its rallies, urging

the group to "keep up the fight."

"May your mission be blessed and protected, may the Iranian people be blessed," said the Republican, who has refused to rule out running in the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

Pompeo's support for the group was echoed by Brazile, who praised the "remarkable courage and leadership" of the NRCI's president, Maryam Rajavi. Also speaking during the

event were Democratic Sens. Bob Menendez and Cory Booker, and Republican Sens. Roy Blunt and Ted Cruz, the former U.K. House of Commons Speaker John Bercow, former Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini, former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and others.

Iran slammed Western politicians taking part in the event, with Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh accusing them of "(selling) themselves cheap for a Europe-hosted circus arranged by a once Saddam-backed terrorist cult with Iranian blood on its hands."

The ministry also condemned the speech by Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa, calling it "unacceptable, against diplomatic norms and spirit" of bilateral relations, the IRNA news agency reported. Jansa, whose country holds the rotating European Council presidency, had said he backed calls for an independent investigation into Raisi's role in the 1988 executions.

"The Iranian regime must be held accountable for human rights violations and the international community must be more firm on this," he said. □

EU border agency to "significantly" step up Lithuania help



Migrants from Cameroon rest at the refugee camp in the village of Vydeniai, Lithuania, Saturday, July 10, 2021.

Associated Press

By JARI TANNER
Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — The European Union's border agency is pledging to "signifi-

cantly" step up its support to Lithuania in the coming days "due to the growing migratory pressure at Lithuania's border with Belarus"

that the Baltic nation is trying to contain.

The decision by Frontex, the agency responsible for coordinating border control between EU member states and third countries, was announced late Saturday following a video call between Frontex's Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri and Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda.

"Lithuania's border is our common external border and Frontex stands ready to help where needed," Leggeri said in a statement. "We are ready to strengthen our level of support and deploy more European standing corps officers and equipment" to Lithuania, an EU and NATO member of 2.8 million.

Frontex's operation, which started earlier this month with the deployment of a dozen officers and patrol cars, will more than double next week, the agency said.

Nausėda's office said reinforcements pledged by Frontex were expected to reach Lithuania by July 15 and that some armed border patrols and additional translators arrived over the weekend. In addition, a patrol helicopter will be sent to Lithuania from neighboring Poland and discussions were under way to dispatch another helicopter from Germany, Nausėda's office said.

In a tweet, Nausėda thanked Frontex for its support "to manage flows of

illegal migrants through eastern border" with Belarus, another former Soviet republic that is not in the EU.

Lithuania, which has granted refuge to Belarus opposition figures, accuses its neighbor of organizing the border crossings by people mainly from Iraq, the Middle East and Africa.

In June, the number of illegal border crossings from Belarus into Lithuania rose six-fold, increasing the pressure on national border control authorities, Frontex said. The phenomenon has accelerated in July. More than 1,500 people have crossed into Lithuania from Belarus in the past two months — 20 times more than in all of 2020. □

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Some Haitians turn to prayer after president's assassination

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

Hundreds of Haitians sought solace in prayer at Sunday church services as a political power struggle threatened to further destabilize their fragile country after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

Roman Catholic and Protestant church leaders asked for calm and told people to remain strong as anxiety about the future grew, with authorities providing no answers or theories about who masterminded the killing by a group of gunmen early Wednesday at the president's home. Martine Moïse, the president's wife, was critically injured and was transported to Miami for treatment.

"Facing this situation, we will not be discouraged... You must stay and fight for peace," Father Edwina Sainte-Louis said during a sermon broadcast on TV that included a small picture of Moïse with a banner that read: "Haiti will re-



A vendor of used shoes and secondhand clothing sleeps under a truck in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Saturday, July 10, 2021, three days after President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated in his home.

Associated Press

member you." Authorities have arrested at least 19 suspects, 17 of whom are Colombian and two Haitian-Americans. At least three others were killed and six are on the run, the government said. Prosecutors have requested that high-profile politicians including presidential candidate Reginald Boulos and former Haitian Senate President Youri Latortue meet officials for question-

ing as the investigation continues. Authorities also said they plan to interview at least two members of Moïse's security detail. Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph is currently leading Haiti with the help of the police and military, but he faces mounting challenges to his power. Ariel Henry, whom Moïse designated as prime minister a day before he was killed, has said he believes

he is the rightful prime minister, a claim also backed by a group of legislators who are members of Moïse's Tet Kale party. That group also supports Joseph Lambert, head of Haiti's dismantled Senate, as the country's provisional president.

Haiti, a country of more than 11 million people, currently has only 10 elected officials after it failed to hold parliamentary elections, leading Moïse to rule by decree for more than a year until his death.

While the streets were calm on Sunday, government officials worry about what lies ahead and have requested U.S. and U.N. military assistance.

"We still believe there is a path for chaos to happen," Haiti Elections Minister Mathias Pierre told The Associated Press.

Pentagon chief spokesman John Kirby said on Fox News Sunday that the Pentagon is analyzing the request to send troops to Haiti and that no decisions have been made. He said

a team, largely comprising agents from the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI, were heading down to Haiti "right now" to help with the investigation of the assassination.

"I think that's really where our energies are best applied right now, in helping them get their arms around investigating this incident and figuring out who's culpable, who's responsible and how best to hold them accountable going forward," Kirby said. The United Nations has been involved in Haiti on and off since 1990. The last U.N. peacekeeping mission arrived in 2004 and all military peacekeepers left the country in 2017. But a stabilization group stayed behind to train national police, help the government strengthen judicial and legal institutions and monitor human rights. That mission ended in 2019 and was replaced by a political mission headed by an American diplomat, Helen La Lime. □

Hong Kong pro-democracy group downsizes amid crackdown

HONG KONG (AP) — One of Hong Kong's most established pro-democracy civic organizations said it is letting go its paid staff and halving the size of its steering committee after Beijing stepped up its crackdown on opposition activity in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China is best known for organizing an annual rally and candlelight vigil remembering those killed in the bloody 1989 crackdown

on pro-democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. The group said in a statement Saturday that seven of its 14 remaining steering committee members had decided to step down in the face of "growing political and legal risks." Of the seven members remaining, three are currently in jail for protest-related activities — chairman Lee Cheuk-yan as well as vice chairmen Albert Ho Chun-yan and Chow Hang-tung. Letting go of staff was to "ensure their safety" and would take effect at the

end of the month, the statement said. While the 32-year-old group said the changes would affect its operations, it vowed that "regardless of whatever difficulties or challenges we face, the alliance will continue to grit our teeth and move onwards one step at a time."

Following months of anti-government protests in 2019, Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong last year. The criteria for elected officials has been narrowed to those who meet



In this June 4, 2021, file photo, people hold LED candles to mark the anniversary of the military crackdown on a pro-democracy student movement in Beijing, outside Victoria Park in Hong Kong.

Associated Press

a loosely defined standard of patriotism. The Legislative Council has been reorganized to ensure an overwhelming majority for pro-Beijing delegates, while most of the city's leading opposition voices have been jailed, intimidated into silence or have moved abroad to seek asylum. □

LOCAL



MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Center Visit our newest Location on Palm Beach!

PALM BEACH — MedCare's Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Center just opened a third walk-in location on Palm Beach at Budget Car Rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar. The other two locations are at the Cove Mall and near the Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort at the Mill.

All three fit2fly test centers offer your best option for the post vacation COVID-19 test which has been a requirement since January 26th 2021 by the U.S. before returning home. All passengers going to the United States, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a negative (antigen or PCR) COVID-19 test result of a test taken maximum three days prior to boarding the flight, or documentation of recovery from COVID-19. MedCare's testing centers in and close to the hotels provide you with an easy and secure solution.

MedCare Clinic, a high-quality medical clinic that is specialized in urgent care for tourists and that has been appointed as the national COVID-19 clinic for tourists, and Laboratorio di Servicio, a full-service modern medical laboratory with state-of-the-art equipment, have partnered up to provide fast and reliable COVID-19 testing to all. Laboratorio di Servicio is ISO-15189:2012 accredited by the Dutch Council for Accreditation (M317).

Rapid PCR

As Aruba resumes to receive more and more visitors each month, one thing has become very clear: testing is critical. Thus far MedCare Clinic has been offering high-volume laboratory testing with results in 24 hours or less. The newest service on the market is Rapid PCR, where you receive your results in minutes not hours.

Just steps away from you

The Fit2Fly COVID-19 Testing Centers are located at the Cove Mall, near the Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort at the Mill, and now also at Budget car rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar. These three locations at a stone's throw from your resort, condominium, or other vacation accommodation. Walk-ins are welcome. It is recommended that the tests are done timely, as the negative test is only accepted if taken up to three days before boarding your flight. MedCare Fit2Fly Testing Center at the Cove Mall is opposite the Holiday Inn and is open every day for walk-ins from 8 AM through 10 PM. MedCare's other location is situated at The Courtyard Aruba Resort, is across the street from the RIU Hotel and is open every day from 8:30 AM until 2 PM. The Newest location at Budget Car Rental next to Soprano's Piano Bar is open daily from 5 PM to 9 PM.



At your hotel

For a selection of hotels/resorts in Aruba, MedCare has setup Testing Centers on site. The hotels/resorts at which we have a testing site are: Divi All Inclusive, Divi Dutch Village, Divi Golf, Divi Phoenix, Divi Tamarijn, Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort, Hyatt Regency, Renaissance, and the Ritz-Carlton Resort. Please contact your front desk for more information on our Testing Centers at these properties.

Costs and timing

Passengers must be tested with a viral test that could be either an Antigen Test or a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), such as the reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (PCR). The price for the Antigen Test is only \$50, and the PCR Test is available, for \$125. The new rapid PCR will be \$150 (results in 30 minutes.) MedCare offers the easier and substantially cheaper Antigen Test that is acceptable for travel to the U.S. as per the CDC guidelines. Pre-travel testing is not covered by the Aruban visitor insurance. Please contact your insurance company to verify if testing costs are insured. Results are e-mailed to you within 24 hours of testing.

Private bookings

For your convenience, Medcare also offers private testing at your accommodation/hotel room for a one-time service fee of \$120. This fee covers testing up to 10 people (one appointment, at one location and a specific time). Additional persons will be charged \$10 per person. □

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Monuments of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Since 1996, 'Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba' (Monuments Fund Aruba) has primarily been involved in the funding of restoration and maintenance of protected monuments, and has been the financial institution in the field of heritage conservation. The fund owns 15 monuments, out of the 36 protected monuments in the island, but there are over 300 more monuments on the list to be protected. A well-known historical monument is the Bushiribana Goldmill.

Between 1814 to 1915 there were different companies looking for gold on

Aruba. This ruin was built in 1872 at Bushiribana by the Aruba Island Gold Mining Company, with the help of masons from Curacao and Aruba. A very well-known Aruban mason of that time was Alexander Donati. A wooden crane was built to help tilt the big heavy stones. The building served as a gold smelter from 1872 to 1899. Here were millions of pounds of gold processed during the gold rush of the nineteenth century in Aruba. After the Aruba Island Gold Mining Company left, came the gold smelter in the hands of other gold mining companies. A total of 200-300 miners worked here. There

Aruba to me...

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for

supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today's newspaper we received a great picture from **Maria Padron**. She wrote:
"Aruba to me is... BEAUTIFUL. SUNSET AND CALM."



were several buildings in this area during that time including an administration office and houses for the miners. The last company that used this gold smelter

was the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. It left Bushiribana in 1899.

For more information check out their Facebook page stichting monumenten

fonds aruba or their website <http://www.monumentenfondsaruba.com>. □

Source: Monumentsfonds Aruba and Mr. Dufi Kock

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Papillon Restaurant presents: Chef's Garden, culinary magic by European top chef in a romantic garden



PALM BEACH —A true once-in-a-lifetime experience is coming up. The stage: an Aruban cunucu house creating a magical ambience. The play: The Chef's Garden; a 6-course culinary voyage and French-Asian gastronomic ecstasy by Dutch top chef Martijn Liebregts on Wednesdays. You will leave this culinary Garden of Eden in an enchanted state creating a memory that will last a lifetime. Be sure to reserve this opportunity before others do. This production is presented to you by Papillon Restaurant.

Sometimes combining the best of the best is a matter of all things falling into place. Every Wednesday from 7pm you are welcomed to enter a world where food is a passion. Papillon Restaurant presents their guest chef Liebregts- who will be on the island for a

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limited time period - and with The Chef's Garden menu being a fresh concept on the island, we're sure you will fall completely in love with this.

A bit about Martijn

Liebregts is the perfect example of when career and passion come together. He earned his spurs at Amber, one of the best French fine dining restaurants Hong Kong has to offer, with 2 Michelin-stars and ranked as the 24th best restaurant in the world. Amber has been the place where he got inspired by the use of Asian ingredients prepared in a classical French way which is still the base of his nowadays cooking style. Moving back to Amsterdam, The Netherlands, he joined the team of former Bib Gourmand restaurant "Wilde Zwijnen", which was awarded the title "The New Dutch Cuisine" by the New York Times. He has been there and done it all around the world.

The menu is carefully done with local products, fresh and perfectly matched with a selection of wines by local sommeliers. Diet options are available; please inform them when you make your reservation.

The Secret Garden & Papillon

This is an in-home dining experience where you will feel you are part of an exclusive setting. Private culinary events are the owner's specialty and their lush, tropical garden is also inviting for you to relax and indulge in hours of authentic culinary delights, a heaven to foodies. For more than a decade, Papillon restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. They know how to thrill and in collaboration with The Secret Garden we can only expect phenomenal.

For reservations:

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Musk under fire again: CEO to testify over Tesla acquisition

By TOM KRISHER

AP Auto Writer

In the runup to Tesla Inc.'s 2016 acquisition of a company called SolarCity, Elon Musk hailed the deal as a "no brainer" — a purchase that would combine the leading maker of electric vehicles with a manufacturer of solar panels that can recharge EVs.

It didn't exactly work out that way.

On Monday in the Delaware Court of Chancery, the Tesla CEO will testify about the \$2.5 billion deal in a shareholder lawsuit that alleges that Tesla's acquisition was rife with conflicts of interest, overlooked SolarCity's fundamental weaknesses and unsurprisingly failed to produce the profits Musk had promised.

Questioned under oath, Musk plans to defend the purchase as a justifiable acquisition.

At the time of the all-stock purchase, Musk was SolarCity's largest stakeholder and its chairman. Seven shareholder lawsuits, consolidated into one, alleged that Tesla directors breached their fiduciary duties in bowing to Musk's wishes and agreeing to buy the struggling company. In what the plaintiffs call a clear conflict of interest, SolarCity had been founded by Musk and two of his cousins, Lyndon and Peter Rive.



In this March 14, 2019, file photo, Tesla CEO Elon Musk speaks before unveiling the Model Y at the company's design studio in Hawthorne, Calif.

Associated Press

Last August, a judge approved a \$60 million settlement that resolved claims made against all the directors on Tesla's board except Musk without any admission of fault. That left Musk, who refused to settle, as the sole remaining defendant. The trial that begins Monday had been scheduled for March of last year but was postponed because of the viral pandemic.

Daniel Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, called the acquisition a "clear black eye" for Musk and Tesla, in large part because SolarCity has failed to turn a profit.

"It basically was putting good money after bad," Ives said. "For all the successes and all of the unimaginable heights Musk has achieved, this is one of the lowlights."

Most investors, Ives said, place no value on the company's solar business. "I just think Musk and Tesla underestimated the challenges and the hurdles that the business brings," he said. That said, Ives said he thought Tesla's energy business could still become "modestly successful."

Tesla, which has disbanded its media relations department, did not answer

a message Friday seeking comment about the lawsuit. In its 2020 annual report, the company argued that the lawsuit was without merit and that Tesla would vigorously defend itself.

"We are unable to estimate the possible loss or range of loss, if any, associated with these claims," the company report said.

Tesla's energy generation and storage business generated \$1.9 billion in revenue last year — 24% more than it did the previous year. Much of that revenue came from selling battery storage units. Tesla doesn't specify whether the busi-

ness made a profit, and it also has debt and expenses.

The lawsuit filed by the plaintiffs contends that Musk drove the decision to acquire SolarCity despite his clear-cut conflict of interest.

Musk has a history of fighting government agencies and lawsuits. He was forced to pay a \$20 million fine to the Securities and Exchange Commission for making statements on Twitter about having the money to take the company private when he didn't. But he won a defamation lawsuit that was filed by a British diver involved in the rescue of a Thai soccer team that was trapped in a flooded cave. Musk had called the man "pedo guy" on Twitter.

Even if the trial ends with Musk having to pay personally for the whole SolarCity deal, \$2.5 billion won't much hurt the world's third-wealthiest person. Forbes magazine has estimated that Musk is worth roughly \$163 billion.

Ives suggested that while any such payment wouldn't seriously affect Musk's wealth, it would damage his reputation for choosing acquisitions.

Musk is fighting the lawsuit after others have settled "because that's what Musk does," Ives said. "I think Elon believes this was the right deal and still does." □

China vows retaliation after U.S. blacklists companies

BEIJING (AP) — China on Sunday said it will take "necessary measures" to respond to the U.S. blacklisting of Chinese companies over their alleged role in abuses of Uyghur people and other Muslim ethnic minorities. The Commerce Ministry said the U.S. move constituted an "unreasonable suppression of Chinese enterprises and a serious breach of international economic and trade rules." China will "take necessary measures to firmly safeguard Chinese companies' legitimate rights and inter-

ests," the ministry's statement said. No details were given, but China has denied allegations of arbitrary detention and forced labor in the far western region of Xinjiang and increasingly responded to sanctions against companies and officials with its own bans on visas and financial links.

The U.S. Commerce Department said in a statement Friday that the electronics and technology firms and other businesses helped enable "Beijing's campaign of repression, mass detention and high-

technology surveillance" against Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. The penalties prohibit Americans from selling equipment or other goods to the firms. The United States has stepped up financial and trade penalties over China's treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, along with its crackdown on democracy in the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong.

The Chinese government since 2017 has detained a million or more people in Xinjiang. Critics accuse China of operating forced



People wearing face masks visit a fashion boutique displaying an American flag in Beijing, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Associated Press

labor camps and carrying out torture and coerced sterilization as it allegedly seeks to assimilate Muslim ethnic minority groups. The U.S. Commerce Department said 14 companies were added to its Entity List over their dealings in Xinjiang, and another five for aiding China's armed forces. □

CROSSWORD

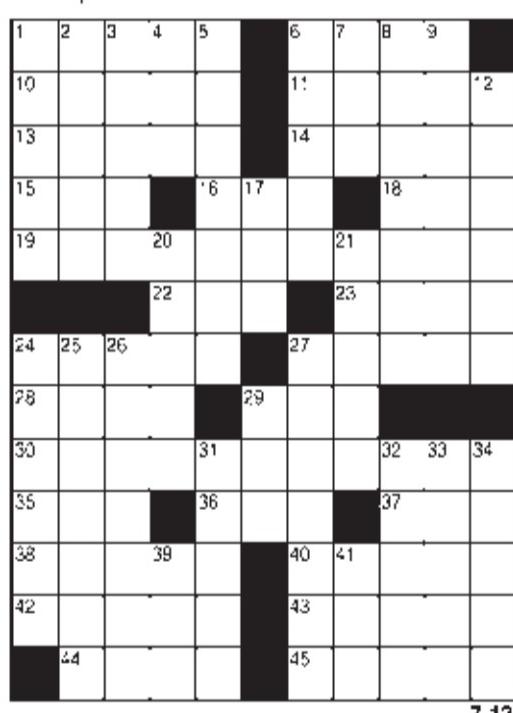
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Paint-spilling sound 43 Annoyed
6 Served perfectly
10 Partly Prefix
11 Tricks
13 To the time that
14 Float along
15 Play division
16 Spike of film
18 Knight's title
19 Stephen King book
22 Gallery fill
23 Mid-March day
24 Anarchic events
27 Sanctify
28 Land unit
29 Snapshot
30 Stephen King book
35 Droop
36 Me, to Michel
37 Tell tales
38 Bush's successor
40 Too trusting
42 Taboo acts

**Saturday's answer**

- 2 Party drink
3 Coffee bar order
4 "Do — say!"
5 Boat steerers
6 Said further
7 Nasty dog
8 Series unit
9 Gives the herb meaning of
27 Two-piece
12 Emphasis suits
17 Have lunch
20 Out of style
21 Nada
24 Betrays
25 Crane of producer
26 Pizzeria
27 Hollow
30 Simpsons"
31 Old hand
32 Similar
33 Bile
34 Nourishes
39 "The
41 "Roses
— red"



AXYDLBAAXR
 is LONGELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-12**CRYPTOQUOTE**

IFY IFYEIYQ LEW PQYEIYX IA

IYOO TYATOY IFY IQGIE EVAGI

ODCY EZX IFY WAPDEO

WDIGEIDAZ. — WIYOQE EXOYQ

Saturday's Cryptoquote: EVERY PARTING IS A FORM OF DEATH, AS EVERY REUNION IS A TYPE OF HEAVEN. — TRYON EDWARDS

QAnon has receded from social media -- but it's just hidingBy BARBARA ORTUTAY
AP Technology Writer

On the face of it, you might think that the QAnon conspiracy has largely disappeared from big social media sites. But that's not quite the case.

True, you're much less likely to find popular QAnon catchphrases like "great awakening," "the storm" or "trust the plan" on Facebook these days. Facebook and Twitter have removed tens of thousands of accounts dedicated to the baseless conspiracy theory, which depicts former President Donald Trump as a hero fighting a secret battle against a sect of devil-worshipping pedophiles who dominate Hollywood, big business, the media and government.

Gone are the huge "Stop the Steal" groups that spread falsehoods about the 2020 U.S. presidential elections. Trump is gone as well, banned from Twitter permanently and suspended from posting on Facebook until 2023.

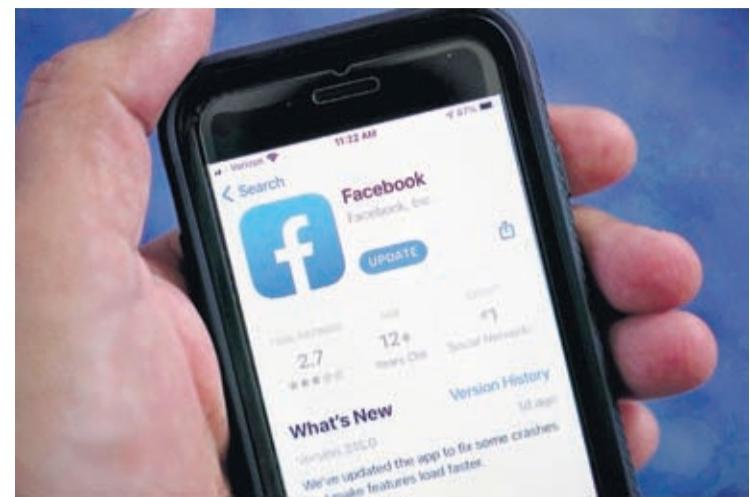
But QAnon is far from winding down. Federal intelligence officials recently warned that its adherents could commit more violence, like the deadly Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6. At least one open supporter of QAnon has been elected to Congress.

In the four years since someone calling themselves "Q" started posting enigmatic messages on fringe internet discussions boards, QAnon has grown up.

That's partly because QAnon now encompasses a variety of conspiracy theories, from evangelical or religious angles to alleged pedophilia in Hollywood and the Jeffrey Epstein scandal, said Jared Holt, a resident fellow at the Atlantic Council's DFLab who focuses on domestic extremism.

"Q-specific stuff is sort of dwindling," he said. But the worldviews and conspiracy theories that QAnon absorbed are still with us.

Loosely tying these movements together is a general



The Facebook app is shown on a smart phone, Friday, April 23, 2021, in Surfside, Fla.

Associated Press

distrust of a powerful, often leftist elite.

Among them are purveyors of anti-vaccine falsehoods, adherents of Trump's "Big Lie" that the 2020 presidential election was stolen and believers in just about any other worldview convinced that a shadowy cabal secretly controls things.

For social platforms, dealing with this faceless, shifting and increasingly popular mindset is a far more complicated challenge than they've dealt with in the past.

Online, such groups now blend into the background. Where Facebook groups once openly referenced QAnon, you'll now see others like "Since you missed this in the so called MSM," a page referencing "mainstream media" that boasts more than 4,000 followers. It features links to clips of Fox News' Tucker Carlson and to articles from right-wing publications such as Newsmax and the Daily Wire.

Subjects range from allegedly rampant crime to unfounded claims of widespread election fraud and an "outright war on conservatives." Such groups aim to draw followers in deeper by directing them to further information on less-regulated sites such as Gab or Parler.

When DFLab analyzed more than 40 million appearances of QAnon catchphrases and related terms on social media this spring, it found that their presence on mainstream

platforms had declined significantly in recent months. After peaks in the late summer of 2020 and briefly on Jan. 6, QAnon catchphrases have largely evaporated from mainstream sites, DFLab found.

So while your friends and relatives might not be posting wild conspiracies about Hillary Clinton drinking children's blood, they might instead be repeating debunked claims such as that vaccines can alter your DNA.

There are several reasons for dwindling Q talk — Trump losing the presidential election, for instance, and the lack of new messages from "Q."

But the single biggest factor appears to have been the QAnon crackdown on Facebook and Twitter.

Despite well-documented mistakes that revealed spotty enforcement, the banishment largely appears to have worked. It is more difficult to come across blatant QAnon accounts on mainstream social media sites these days, at least from the publicly available data that does not include, for instance, hidden Facebook groups and private messages.

While QAnon groups, pages and core accounts may be gone, many of their supporters remain on the big platforms — only now they're camouflaging their language and watering down the most extreme tenets of QAnon to make them more palatable. □

Yellen: U.S. regulators to assess risk posed by climate change

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen says she will lead an effort by top U.S. regulators to assess the potential risk that climate change poses to America's financial system, part of a wide-ranging initiative launched by the Biden administration.

Yellen says the regulatory review, which will be done by the Financial Stability Oversight Council, will examine whether banks and other lending institutions are properly assessing the risks to financial stability. She chairs the committee, which includes Treasury, the Federal Reserve, the Securities and Exchange Commission and other financial regulators.

"The current financial system is not producing reliable disclosures," Yellen said in remarks prepared for the Venice International Conference on Climate and released in Washington. As part of President Joe Biden's whole-of-government approach, Yellen said, the council will examine what should be done to improve current regulations on climate-related financial disclosures.

The council was created by Congress in 2010 to improve regulatory coordination in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

Banking executives are concerned that the administration's effort could lead to increased regulatory oversight that will drive up banks' cost of doing business and lessen their ability to make loans.

Yellen said the United States also intended to enlist the support of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other multilateral development banks to focus more resources on combating climate change. The World Bank and the regional development banks are leading sources of the loans used by poor nations for dams and other development projects. "Developing countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change with poverty, food



United States Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen arrives to attend a press conference at a G20 Economy, Finance ministers and Central bank governors' meeting in Venice, Italy, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

security and health outcomes impacted by extreme weather shocks," Yellen said. She said the administration is backing international efforts to mobilize \$100 billion per year from a variety of public and private sources to support efforts by developing countries to combat climate change.

Yellen said she planned to convene a meeting of the heads of the international lending institutions to discuss ways to better align their efforts with the Paris climate agreement. The Trump administration pulled the United States out of the Paris climate agreement, but Biden reversed that decision after taking office this year.

Since taking over as Treasury secretary, Yellen has been one of the leading voices in the administra-

tion to boost government efforts to combat climate change. The administration is also making a big push to include huge investments to slow global warming in the multitrillion-dollar infrastructure spending measures Biden is pushing Congress to approve. That effort has run into Republican opposition with various Biden climate initiatives striped out of a bipartisan infrastructure measure. Environmentalists say a larger, Democratic-only package that is now being developed needs to meet Biden's ambitious climate promises such as moving the country to carbon-free production of electricity and becoming a global leader in use of electric vehicles and the creation of millions of jobs in solar, wind and other clean-energy industries. The Venice in-

Associated Press

ternational conference on climate Sunday followed a meeting of finance officials from the Group of 20 major economies in Venice on Saturday. That group backed a sweeping revision of international taxation that includes a 15% global minimum tax on corporations to deter big companies from seeking out low-rate tax havens. The measure is scheduled to be a key agenda item when Biden and other G-20 leaders meet for a summit in Rome on Oct. 30-31. □



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The map shows the following locations:

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- Weststraat
- Scheepstraat
- Schouwstraat
- Caya G.F. Bellico Cross
- Caya G.J.
- Bus terminal
- Royal Plaza Mall
- L.G. Smith Boulevard
- Downtown

A magnifying glass is focused on the ARUBA TODAY and BONDIA building on Weststraat.

Back in Cannes, Sean Penn directs again, with daughter Dylan

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — Sean Penn has been to the Cannes Film Festival about a dozen times — from bumming around with Robert De Niro in 1984 to presiding over the jury.

But his last visit was rocky. Penn's film, 2016's "The Last Face," flopped with critics in way that would make some filmmakers gun shy about returning.

Penn, though, didn't hesitate. On Saturday night, he premiered in Cannes his latest film, "Flag Day," in which he also co-stars.

A few hours before walking down the red carpet, Penn sat comfortably in a hotel bar, excited to be back. The festival is the greatest in the world, he said. "Everyone knows it's the big game."

And it's a game Penn welcomes. Cannes is worth it, even if he takes a few lumps.

"The bad stuff, these days, I've been on such extreme ends on that. It's like: whatever," says Penn. "The thing is: I am confident that I know as much -- more --about acting than almost any of these critics. And I'm very confident in the performance I'm most concerned about."

With that, Penn raises his hand and points toward where his daughter, Dylan Penn, is sitting. Dylan, 30, is the star of "Flag Day."

She has dabbled before in acting but it's easily her biggest role yet. In the film, adapted from Jennifer Vogel's 2005 memoir "Flim-Flam Man: The True Story of My Father's Counterfeit Life," she plays Jennifer Vogel, the journalist daughter of a swindler and counterfeiter (played by Penn).

Her father's confidence isn't misplaced. Dylan is natural, poised and captivating. She looks a veteran, already, which might be expected of the child of Penn and Robin Wright. And those critics? Variety said the film "reveals Dylan Penn to be a major actor." But for a long time, Dylan never wanted the spotlight. "Growing up, being sur-



Sean Penn and Dylan Frances Penn poses for portrait photographs for the film 'Flag Day', at the 74th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Saturday, July 10, 2021.

Associated Press

rounded by actors and being on set, it was really something that didn't interest me at all," Dylan says. "I always thought, and still think, my passion lies in working behind the camera. But as soon as I expressed wanting to do that kind of thing, both of my parents said separately: You won't be a good director if you don't know what it's like to be in the actor's shoes."

Dylan is stepping forward in movies the same time her father is withdrawing. Penn, 60, is in the midst of shooting Sam Esmail's Watergate series for Starz, with Julia Roberts. But he has recently pulled further away from Hollywood. Penn devotes more time to Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE), the nonprofit he started after the 2010 earthquake to help Haitians. Haiti has this week again plunged into crisis after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse, a situation Penn calls heart-breaking.

"These people have been working so hard to bring their country up and this kind of horrible violence,

cynicism — whatever my suspicions the motivation was," he says. "I'm glad that our teams are safe for the moment, but it's horrible."

During the pandemic, CORE has erected testing and vaccination sites, including one at Los Angeles' Dodger Stadium, and dispensed millions of shots. In movies, Penn still has a pair of upcoming roles he says he promised to do years earlier. But beyond that?

"Then I just don't know. I'd be very surprised. I don't think I would start a movie without knowing if it was going to be a movie. And I don't think I'd direct something that wasn't a movie unless it was on the Broadway stage," he says, and then smiles. "There's a simpler way of saying that: I'm not interested in directing for the small screen."

Penn is increasingly at odds with Hollywood's dominant priorities. He's never made a franchise film. He laments Marvel movies and "how much it's taken up the space and claimed so much time in the careers of so many talented people." He misses cinema that isn't

"just razzle-dazzle, Cirque de Soleil movies."

So-called "cancel culture," he has issues with, too. Arguing that today he wouldn't be allowed to play gay icon Harvey Milk (2008's "Milk"), Penn recently said that soon only Danish princes will play Hamlet.

But his biggest gripe may be with the onset of direct-to-streaming film releases. "The way I've always put it is: It's not the girl I fell in love with," Penn says.

MGM will release "Flag Day" theatrically Aug. 13; Penn considers himself "lucky to have a movie that's going to be a movie." But it took years to reach this stage. Dylan first read the book when her father optioned it when she was 15. Many possible iterations followed — Penn didn't initially plan to direct — but the prospect of doing the film with Dylan was appealing.

"I have always thought if she wanted to do it, I'd encourage it," Penn says.

For Dylan, the father-daughter relationship of "Flag Day" — Jennifer tries to help and stabilize her scamming father but also

inherits some of his more destructive, conman habits — is a half-reflection of their own bond together.

"She always strived to have this really honest, transparent relationship with her father which she never got it in return," Dylan Penn says. "I've tried to have that with my dad and got it in return."

"It made us a lot closer than we've ever been," she adds. "Of course, there were times when I talked back or had an attitude, but it was like: You can't. This is your boss. This is work. This is not your dad right now."

Dylan grants the experience was so satisfying that she'd like to continue acting. Her dad, she feels, may be "passing the torch a little bit," she says. Hopper Jack Penn, her younger brother, also co-stars in the film. The rest of the cast is more veteran, including Josh Brolin and Regina King. Original songs by Cat Power, Eddie Vedder and Glen Hansard contribute to the score.

But the most vibrant parts of "Flag Day" are the scenes between Dylan and her dad. □

American Sepp Kuss wins Tour de France's grueling 15th stage

ANDORRA LA VELLA, Andorra (AP) — Sepp Kuss couldn't suppress a wide grin as he raced toward the finish line to become the first American in 10 years to win a stage at the Tour de France.

Just before winning Sunday's grueling 15th stage, Kuss threw his sunglasses into the crowd and put his arms in the air before covering his face, succumbing to emotion and exhaustion.

Tyler Farrar had been the last American to win a stage at cycling's biggest race in 2011.

"It's incredible, I'm lost for words," Kuss said.

The 26-year-old Colorado native left it late to make his move in the punishing 191-kilometer (118-mile) ride from Ceret at the foothills of the Pyrenees to the tiny mountain-bound nation of Andorra.

"This was Sepp's day," said Jumbo-Visma teammate Wout van Aert, who helped put Kuss in a position to break. "He lives in Andorra and he was looking forward to this stage."

The American attacked going up the 1,796-meter Col de Beixalis and maintained his hard-fought advantage over Spanish veteran Alejandro Valverde, who finished 23 seconds behind.

"To be honest, I was suffering a lot in this Tour de France. I didn't feel like I had the spice in the legs. Today I knew it was finishing where I live, so I was motivated for the stage," Kuss said.

Col de Beixalis was the steepest climb in a day of many ascents in the Pyrenees. Kuss' average speed going up was 20.4 kph (12.7 mph), and 57.9 kph (36 mph) going down, where he clocked a maximum speed of 80.6 kph (50 mph).

"I don't ride to Col de Beixalis much in training because it's so hard, but I knew if I had a good gap, I'd stay away till the finish. Wout van Aert did a great job for me in the valley. It means a lot to me to win a Tour de France stage," Kuss

said.

Dutch rider Wout Poels finished third and took over the polka dot jersey for the best climber.

"It's obviously going to be a great battle for the mountains jersey," Poels said. Race leader Tadej Pogacar enjoyed an uneventful day and remained on course for his second overall victory.

The defending champion was only questioned toward the end of the stage as Jonas Vingegaard followed Ben O'Connor's example with two attacks.

Pogacar answered both without any problems and increased his overall lead to more than five minutes over Rigoberto Uran and Vingegaard.

"I felt good, and I wasn't

worried at all about the last climb. I just needed to follow the other riders there, as I did," Pogacar said. "My team did a great job at protecting me all day long, providing me with everything I needed. The key today was to keep myself hydrated, to have water available all the time, and my teammates did that job perfectly."

Guillaume Martin, who was second overall ahead of the stage, dropped back to ninth.

Before the final tussles on Col de Beixalis, riders had to overcome the 2,408-meter Port d'Envalira, where Nairo Quintana made a break after a strong headwind forced riders across the road. Quintana was first to the summit before



Sepp Kuss of the U.S. celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the fifteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 191.3 kilometers (118.9 miles) with start in Ceret, France, and finish in Andorra-la-Vella, Andorra, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

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he was hauled back. Quintana tried again on Col de Beixalis before Kuss took over.

Nacer Bouhanni, who had

been suffering since a big crash on Stage 13, quit after the intermediate sprint with 124.5 kilometers remaining. □

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20 Slams! Djokovic wins Wimbledon to tie Federer, Nadal

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)

— Novak Djokovic tied Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal by claiming his 20th Grand Slam title Sunday, coming back to beat Matteo Berrettini 6-7 (4), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 in the Wimbledon final.

The No. 1-ranked Djokovic earned a third consecutive championship at the All England Club and sixth overall.

He adds that to nine titles at the Australian Open, three at the U.S. Open and two at the French Open to equal his two rivals for the most majors won by a man in tennis history.

"I have to pay a great tribute to Rafa and Roger. They are legends. Legends of our sport. They are the two most important players that I ever faced in my career," said Djokovic, a 34-year-old from Serbia.

"They are, I think, the reason that I am where I am today. They've helped me realize what I need to do in order to improve, to get stronger mentally, physically, tactically."

Federer tweeted his congratulations shortly after the match ended, writing, "Wonderful performance, well done!"

Djokovic is now the only man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win the first three major tournaments in a season. He can aim for a calendar-year Grand Slam



Serbia's Novak Djokovic holds the winners trophy as he poses for photographers after he defeated Italy's Matteo Berrettini in the men's singles final on day thirteen of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Sunday, July 11, 2021.

Associated Press

— something last accomplished by a man when Laver did it 52 years ago — at the U.S. Open, which starts Aug. 30.

"I'm hoping. I'm going to definitely give it a shot," Djokovic told the Centre Court crowd during the trophy presentation.

"I'm in a great form and obviously playing well and playing my best tennis at Grand Slams is the highest priority that I have right now at this stage of my career. So let's keep it going." This was his 30th major final — among men, only Federer has played more, 31 — and the first for Berrettini, a 25-year-old from Italy who was seeded No. 7.

"Hopefully," Berrettini said, "it's not going to be my last one."

It was a big sporting day in London for Italians: Their na-

tional soccer team faced England at Wembley Stadium in the European Championship final at night.

With Marija Cicak officiating, the first female chair umpire for a men's final at a tournament that began in 1877, play began as the sun made a rare appearance during the fortnight, the sky visible in between the clouds.

The opening game featured signs of edginess from both, but especially Djokovic, whose pair of double-faults contributed to the half-dozen combined unforced errors, compared with zero winners for either.

He faced a break point but steadied himself and held there and, as was the case with every set, it was Djokovic who took the lead by getting through on Berrettini's speedy serve.

Berrettini came in with a tournament-high 101 aces and that's where his game is built: free points off the serve and quick-strike forehands that earned him the nickname "Hammer."

Those powerful strokes sent line judges contorting to get their head out of harm's way. Djokovic occasionally took cover himself, crouching and raising his racket as if it were a shield to block back serves aimed at his body.

Not many opponents manage to return serves at 137 mph and end up winning the point, but Djokovic did that at least twice. And the big groundstrokes that the 6-foot-5, barrel-chested Berrettini can drive past most other players kept coming back off Djokovic's racket.

Indeed, this one could have been over much sooner than the four sets and nearly 3 1/2 hours it lasted: Djokovic took leads of 4-1 in the first set, 4-0 in the second and 3-1 in the third. But in the first, especially, he faltered in ways he rarely does, wasting a set point at 5-2 and getting broken when he served for it at 5-3.

In the ensuing tiebreaker, they were tied at 3-all, but Berrettini won three of the next four points with forehands, and closed it out with a 138 mph ace.

He strutted to the change-over and many of the nearly 15,000 spectators rose to

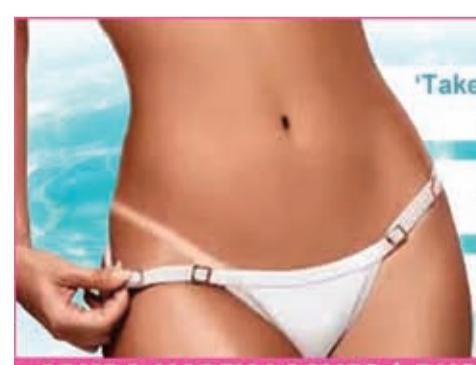
celebrate along with him. Chants of "Ma-tte-o!" rang out early in the third set. Soon, others responded with Djokovic's nickname, "No-le!" Later in the set, Djokovic held his racket to his ear and motioned for more support.

But Djokovic is nothing if not a fighter, and he blunted Berrettini's best efforts and won the fans over, too. When it was over, Djokovic dropped to his back on the turf, arms and legs splayed, showered by fans' cheers. There were some magical moments, points that contained brilliance by both.

On one, Berrettini somehow came up with a back-to-the-net, between-the-legs lob that Djokovic somehow tracked down to flick a response with his own back to the court, but it ended up in the net.

On another, which lasted 15 strokes, Djokovic slid into a keep-the-point-going defensive backhand and, after Berrettini replied with a drop shot, sprinted all the way up for a winner. Djokovic raised his index finger — as if to remind everyone, "I'm No. 1!" — and Berrettini flipped his racket end over end, caught it and smiled.

What more could he do? Not much anyone can do against Djokovic, it seems. He has collected eight of the past 12 major trophies — all since turning 30, the most by a man past that age. □



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